

LEIGH HUNT'S LONDON JOURNAL.

TO ASSIST THE ENQUIRING, ANIMATE THE STRUGGLING, AND SYMPATHIZE WITH ALL.

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MR LANDOR'S ODE TO A FRIEND.

ITALY AND FIESOLE.—LATIN VERSION OF A SONG
BY WITHERS.—LATIN EPIGRAM BY MR WEBBE.

An accident, much against our will, prevents us, after all, from doing little more than barely introducing the new and improved edition of Mr Landor's ode, and one or two other favours of classical Correspondents. We thought to have had a chat with the Reader upon Italy, and the "pastoral oat," and Greek and Latin anthologies, but many things, alas! fall out between editorial cups and lips, as well as others; and we must not complain, seeing that not only the love of poetry, but love itself, has its interruptions in this life. Let us be grateful that the love exists.

"Ere I could

Give him that parting kiss which I had set
Betwixt too charming words, comes in my father,
And, like the tyrannous breathing of the north,
Shakes all our buds from blowing."

What an exquisite passage! What force and sweetness! And by the by, what were those "too charming words," between which the kiss was to be set?—a pretty subject for guessing,—and a trial for the refinements of our Readers. For our parts, we have our opinion; but shall not tell it, for fear of spoiling conjecture.

Mr Landor's *rifaccimento* of his ode (re-modelling—there wants a word in English for this process) is as much superior to the former one in strength and richness (contrary to the usual fate of such "improvements") as it is greater in quantity. He has taken a picture, already good, and made it still better, enriching it with every passage of his brush. The critical Reader, who possesses the original copy (see LONDON JOURNAL, NO. 36, page 282) will be interested in comparing the two. Mr Landor has the good fortune to live in a spot worthy of a scholar and poet, amidst the Fiesolian hills of Milton, Dante, Boccaccio, Michael Angelo, and Machiavelli,—with the little river Affrico at his feet (the subject of one of Boccaccio's poems), and immortal memories all round him. The brilliant company of the Decameron retired there to relate their stories; and there, at Maiano, echoes the humbler but pleasant voice of *La Tancia* (the pastoral comedy of Michael Angelo the younger, nephew of the great artist), and Redi's Bacchus has left traces of his purple fingers.

"Fiesole viva; e seco viva il nome
Del buon Salviati, ed il suo bel Maiano."

BACCO IN TOSCANA.

"Long live Fiesole, green old name!
And with it, long life to thy winy fame,
Lovely Maiano, lord of dells,
Where my gentle Salviati dwells."

Bacchus has the remains of an ancient temple at Fiesole; and the wine of Maiano (the select wine, such as Mr Landor speaks of, kept for the lord of the vintage) is the best we ever drank. We translated Redi's "Bacchus in Tuscany," on the spot (the Reader will forgive us for mentioning this); and there we have walked with Mr Landor himself, he carrying up hill in his arms, like a proper nature-loving poet, one of our boys who had got tired, and turning on him a face which always brightens at the sight of children. (This reminds us that next week we must give a poem of his, addressed to his own children,

whom he loves with all the zeal of a father and the hilarity of a playmate.) He has done us the honour of bringing us into his new ode, and wishing we were at Maiano again. Would to God we were,—for the season—and corresponding with the Readers of the LONDON JOURNAL. We would write them such letters (inspired by the wine and the company), as should make them all rise up in a body, and say "Let us go and join them." But—What a word is this *but* in human life—and how it *butteh* our proceedings, and will not let them move on. We have invitations to Norfolk, invitations to Yorkshire (thanks to W. W. and his hearty memory); invitations to Northumberland from one of the men we love best in the world (A. D.), and here we have an invitation to Italy from the author of Fiesolan idyls and the 'Examination of Shakspeare,' and not one of them can we accept. However, there are *buts* to oppose sorrow with, as well as joy; some of these invitations we shall certainly realize, if we live, and the Reader, we hope, shall hear the result; for, like our friends the Gipsies, we always travel in a body of some sort, personal or ideal. Meanwhile we must live in *odes* and books, and help to brighten "grim London,"—where no Reader or Writer of the LONDON JOURNAL (be it known to Mr Landor) *growleth*, but, on the contrary, maketh the best of things, and seeth Landorian visions of Pan and the Nymphs, and 'Examinations of Shakspeare.' Item, let us intimate to him, in (we hope) the complimentary candour of our gratitude, that the "Scotch Critics" alluded to in his ode, have matured the sourness of their young criticism into sweetness, like other wise men, and have no quarrel now with the illustrious Muse of the Lakes. What a beautiful line, by the way, is that concluding one of Mr Landor's fifth stanza—

"Serene creators of immortal things."

We seem to behold them sitting in the air of immortality, contemplating their works,—or "revolving their orb'd thoughts," as the writer of 'Arthur Coningsby' finely phrases it.

Mr Landor's ode is followed by an elegant Latin version of George Withers' good old song, with which a valued Correspondent has favoured us, and which Mr Landor himself will not be sorry to read. And after this comes a Latin epigram from the accomplished pen of our friend Egerton Webbe, of which some of our scholarly Readers will perhaps favour their less fortunate brethren of taste with a translation. We give it untranslated, purposely for their amusement to that end.

"TO JOSEPH ABLETT, ESQRE. OF LLANBEDR HALL,
DENBIGHSHIRE.

I.
Lord of the Celtick dells,
Where Clewyd listens as his minstrel tells
Of Arthur, or Pendragon, or perchance
The plumes of flashy France,
Or, in dark region far across the main,
Far as Grenada in the world of Spain,

II.
Warriors untold to Saxon ear,
Until their steel-clad spirits re-appear;
How happy were the hours that held
Thy friend (long absent from his native home),
Amid thy scenes with thee! how wide a field
From all past cares, and all to come!

III.
What hath Ambition's feverish grasp, what hath
Inconstant Fortune, panting Hope;
What Genius, that should cope
With the heart-whispers in that path
Winding so idly, where the idler stream
Flings at the white-hair'd poplars gleam for gleam?

IV.
Ablett, of all the days
My sixty summers ever knew,
Pleasant as there have been no few,
Memory not one surveys
Like those we spent together. Wisely spent
Are they alone, that leave the soul content.

V.
Together we have visited the men,
Whose Scottish critics vainly we'd have drown'd;
Ah, shall we ever clasp the hand again
That gave the British harp its truest sound?
Live Derwent's guest, and thou by Grasmere
springs!
Serene creators of immortal things.'

VI.
And live, too, thou for happier days,
Whom Dryden's force and Spenser's fays
Have heart and soul posset:
Growl in grim London, he who will;
Revisit thou Maiano's hill,
And swell with pride his sunburnt breast.

VII.
Old Redi in his easy chair,
With varied chant awaits thee here,
And here are voices in the grove,
Aside my house, that make me think
Bacchus is coming down to drink
To Ariadne's love.

VIII.
But whither am I borne away
From thee, to whom began my lay?
Courage! I am not yet quite lost;
I step aside to greet my friends;
Believe me, soon the greeting ends,
I know but three or four at most.

IX.
Deem not that time hath borne too hard
Upon the fortunes of thy bard,
Leaving me only three or four:
'Tis my old number; dost thou star?
At such a tale? in what man's heart
Is there fireside for more?

X.
I never courted friends or Fame;
he pouted at me long, at last she came,
And threw her arms around my neck and said,
"Take what hath been for years delay'd,
And fear not that the leaves will fall
One hour the earlier from thy corohal."

XI.
Ablett! thou knowest with what even hand
I waved away the offer'd seat
Among the clambering, clattering, stilted great
The rulers of our land;
Nor crowds, nor kings can lift me up,
Nor sweeten Pleasure's puter cup.

xii.

Thou knowest how, and why, are dear to me
My citron groves of Fiesole;
My chirping Affrico; my beechwood nook;
My Naiads, with feet only in the brook,
Which runs away and giggles in their faces;
Yet there they sit, nor sigh for other places.

xiii.

'Tis not Pelasgian wall
By him made sacred whom alone
'Twere not profane to call
The bard divine, nor (thrown
Far under me), Valdarno, nor the crest
Of Vallombrosa in the crimson east.

xiv.

Here can I rest or roam at will;
Few trouble me, few wish me ill,
Few come across me, few too near
Here all my wishes make their stand;
Here ask I no one's voice or hand;—
Scornful of favour, ignorant of fear.

xv.

Yon vine upon the maple bough
Flouts at the hearty wheat below;
Away her venal wines the wise-man sends,
While those of lower stem he brings
From inmost treasure vault, and sings
Their worth and ear among his chosen friends.

xvi.

Behold our Earth,* most nigh the sun,
Her zone least open to the genial heat,
But, farther off her veins more freely run;
'Tis thus with those who whirl about the Great;—
The nearest shrink and shiver; we remote
May open-breasted blow the pastoral oat.

OLD SONG, BY WITHERS.

Shall I, wastynge in despaire,
Die because a womanne's faire?
Shall my cheeke grow pale with care,
Because another's rosie are?
Be she fairer than the daie,
Or the flowery meades in Maie,
If she thinke not well of me,
What care I how faire she be?

Shall a womanne's goodnesse move
Me to perish for herre love?
Or, her worthie merites knowne,
Make me quite forgette mine owne?
Be she kinder, meeker, thanne
The turtle dove, or pelicanne,
If she be not soe to me,
What care I how kinde she be?

Be she kinde, or meeke, or faire,
I wille ne'er the more despaire;
If she love me, this believe,
I will die ere she shall grieve;
If she slighte me when I woee,
I will scorne and let her goe:
If she be not made for me,
What care I for whom she be?

IDEM LATINE REDDITUM.

An ego depositis tabescam viribus exspes,
Et patiar quod sit famina pulchra mori?
Anne meas pallowe genas cura anxia tinget
Quod petat alterius mala colore rosam?
Exuperet splendore diem sine labe venustas;
Florigerum parit quod nova Maja decus
Illi ni videar qui sim bene dignus amari
Egregium refert quid decus omne mihi?

* It is calculated that the Earth is two million seven hundred and fifty-four thousand miles nearer to the sun in the shortest day than in the longest.

Quod praestet reliquis mulier bonitate, movebit
Ergone dum peream me muliebris amor?
Sint merita illius summā dignissima laude,
Nonne igitur proprii sim memor ipse boni?
Si bonitate simul quoque mansuetudine vincat
Turturis et laudes et, pelicane, tuas:
In me ni bona sit, ni sit mansueta puella,
Quid refert bonitas officiosa mihi?

Sit bona, sit mansueta simul, sit denique pulchra,
Spem me non igitur destituisse sinam;
In me, crede mihi, si pectore pascat amorem,
Ipse prius patiar quam gemat illa mori;
Si vero contrā parvi me pendat amantem,
In rem contemptu fassit abire malam;
Selicet ut placeat mihi ni sit facta puella,
Quid refert cui sit facta puella mihi?

GODFREY GRAFTON.

DE CRASCO.

Crispus ut audiret subito agrotasse parentem,
Cui gravis ex lucis constitut area domo,
Continuò versare piam sub pectore curam
Incipit, inque dies anxiate premi.
Quod cum res tandem que ferret nuncia certas
Expectata diu littera nulla venit,
"Nil igitur scripturus adhuc charissimus?" inquit,
"Tristitiae nostrae nec sublixe libet?
Cerite culpandus, modo ni mors ipsa vetarit;—
Ah! mihi quod culpem nil precor esse patrem."

E. W.

CHARLES THE ELEVENTH'S VISION.*

I, CHARLES the Eleventh, at this day King of Sweden, on the night between the 16th and 17th of December 1676,† was more than usually troubled with my melancholy sickness. I awoke about half-past eleven, when, happening to cast my eyes on the window, I perceived that a strong light was shining in the state-chamber. I said to the Chancellor Bjelke, who was in the room with me, "What light is that in the state-chamber? something must have caught fire." He answered, "O no, your Majesty, it is the light of the moon shining on the window." This answer satisfied me, and I turned toward the wall to enjoy some rest; but an indescribable uneasiness came over me: I turned my face round again, and again saw the light. Then I said, "All can never be right here." "Yes," said my excellent and beloved Chancellor, "it is nothing but the moon." At the same moment, however, the Privy Councillor Bjelke entered, to inquire how I was. I asked this worthy man whether any accident had happened, and there was a fire in the state-chamber. "No," he answered, after a short silence, "God be praised! it is nothing: it is merely the moonlight, which makes it look as if there were a light in the hall." I again felt better satisfied; but, as I cast my eyes that way, it seemed to me that I saw people in it. I got up, threw my nightgown round me, went to the window, and opened it, when I perceived that the hall was quite full of lights. Then I said, "My good Lords, something is not right here. You are duly persuaded that he who fears God must fear nothing in the world. Therefore I will go to the hall to make out what this can be."

Then I desired them to go down to the officer on guard, and beg him to come up with the keys. When he was come, I went with him and them to the locked up secret passage, which led over my room to the right of Gustavus Ericson's bedroom. When we got to it, I ordered the officer to open the door; but out of fear he begged I would have the goodness to excuse him. Then I desired the Chancellor to do so; but he too refused. I desired the Privy Councillor Oxenstiern, who was never afraid of any-

* The account of this extraordinary vision is taken from Arndt's 'Recollections of Sweden,' and his remarks upon it will be subjoined.

† He was in his 21st year.

‡ Probably Gustavus Vasa, Eric Vasa's son. It might, indeed, also be the son of the unfortunate Eric XIV.

thing, to unlock the door; but he answered, "I have sworn to risk my body and blood for your Majesty, but not to open this door." I now began myself to be somewhat startled, but took courage, laid hold of the keys, and opened the door; when we found the whole room, even the floor, covered with black. I and all who were with me trembled much.

We went next to the door of the state-chamber. I again ordered the officer to open the door; but he begged I would be so good as to excuse him. Then I desired the other bystanders to do so; but they all begged to be let off. So I took the key myself, and opened the door; but I had no sooner set a foot in the hall, than I drew it hastily back. I was somewhat frightened; but I said, "My good friends, if you will follow me, we will see what is the matter here. Perhaps God Almighty may purpose to reveal something to us." They all made answer, with a trembling voice, "Yes." Then we went in.

All of us at the same moment saw a long table, with sixteen noble-looking men sitting round it. Each had a large book before him. Among them was a young King, of sixteen or eighteen, with a crown on his head, and a sceptre in his hand. On his right sat a tall handsome man of about forty, whose face bespoke his worth; on his left an old man of about seventy. It was strange to see the young King every now and then shake his head, whereupon each of these noble personages struck his hand hard on his book.

Then I turned my eyes away from them, and close by the table I saw block after block, and executioners, all with their shirt-sleeves tucked up; and they chopt off one head after another, so that the blood began to stream along the floor. God is my witness that I was more than terrified. I looked down at my slippers, to see whether any blood had touched them; but there was none. The persons beheaded were mostly young noblemen.

I turned my eyes away, and behind the table in a corner I saw a throne, which was almost upset, and by it a man who looked as if he must be the ruler of the state. He was about forty years old. I shuddered and trembled as I drew near the door, and cried aloud, "What is the voice of the Lord that I am to hear? O God, when shall this come to pass?" No answer was made me. I cried again, "O God, when shall this come to pass?" But no answer was made me; only the young King shook his head several times, while the other men smote their books with their hands. Again I cried, louder than before, "O God, when shall this come to pass? Grant me thy grace, great God, and tell me, how must I behave myself then?"

Hereupon the young King answered me, "Not in thy time shall this come to pass, but in the time of the sixth Sovereign after thee. And he shall be of the same age and form that thou seest in me; and he who stands here shows what will be the appearance of his guardian. The throne will be on the point of falling in the last years of his regency by means of certain young noblemen. But the guardian, who during his regency persecuted the young King, will then take up his cause; and they will establish his throne more firmly, so that never before shall there have been so great a King in Sweden, nor shall any like him ever come after him; and the Swadish people shall be happy in his days. And he shall live to a great age; he shall leave his kingdom free from debt, and several millions in the treasury. But, before he can sit safely on his throne, there must be a great slaughter, so that the like thereof has never been seen in Sweden, nor ever will be. Be it thy part, King of Sweden, to leave him thy good counsel."

When he had said this, everything disappeared, and we were left alone with our lights. We went away in the greatest astonishment, as everybody may suppose. When we got to the black room, that too was changed, and everything was as usual. Then we went up to my room, and straightway I sat down to write my counsels in letters as well as I could. [They are sealed up: the seal is broken by King after King; they are read, and sealed up again.]

And all this is true: this I avouch with my bodily oath, so help me God.

CHARLES THE ELEVENTH,
Now King of Sweden.

As witnesses on the spot we have seen everything according as his Majesty has related it, and this we avouch with our bodily oaths, so help us God.

Carl Bjelke, Chancellor.

U. W. Bjelke, Privy Councillor.

A. Oxenstiern, Privy Councillor.

Peter Granslen, Officer on Guard.

That this vision of Charles the Eleventh's, says Arndt (writing in 1818), is no fabrication of the last thirty years, is quite certain. I have seen transcripts of the years 1740 and 1760, and have been assured by credible old men, that in their childhood it was a tale already current both in writing and orally. It has been asserted that the original document, signed by the hands of Charles XI and the other persons mentioned therein, is lying in the archives at Stockholm. This, however, is denied by the keepers of them. Not that this disproves its authenticity. Papers may easily be purloined, even out of royal and imperial archives, through fear, or superstition, or interest. Gustavus the Third placed a heavy chest of papers and writings in the library at Upsala. By his will it is not to be opened till thirty or fifty years (I forget which) after his death. It is secured by a number of locks. Yet will anything very interesting be found in it? will there be anything more than mouldy books and papers of no importance, nay perhaps than sand and stones? I doubt it.

Whatever the real state of the case, with regard to this vision, may be, owing to the fate and character of the unfortunate Gustavus IV, and to the relation in which he stood to his late uncle, Charles XIII, it has for some time excited a good deal of attention; more especially as the gloomy spirit of the now deposed and banished King afforded a wall on which destiny might write its fearful Mene-Tekels. Moreover it is remarkable that as much as twenty years ago there were persons who applied it not to Gustavus IV, as being only the fifth King after Charles XI, but to his son.* Thus have oracles and prophecies ever been like two-edged swords. Indeed this, for another reason also, is their true symbol, inasmuch as they always hang suspended between two mysterious powers, the power within us, and the power without us; and the strong soul can always give its own mightier interpretation to destiny, whereupon the power without us flies up into the air, while the power within declares, *I am my own destiny*. Gustavus IV, however, was one of those dark spirits, who themselves sharpen the terrible two-edged sword, and cut themselves with it. But this sword exists in a certain sense for every mortal, even for those whose lot seems too low to deserve oracles and prophecies. In the light of infinite love alone, and of faith in God, does its edge disappear; nay, its very shadow is then no longer seen.

I will only just hint, that those who apply the vision to the son of Gustavus, take hold of the two-edged oracle which lies in the person of the *Guardian or Regent*. I presume most persons know who was the guardian of Gustavus, and who is the guardian of his son. Were we to interpret the oracle with the freedom which the Delphic priestess took, whenever she wanted it, many strange things might come out of it.

We should not indeed make too many Mene-Tekels in history: but ought we to pass them by when they are really before us? and does not the mighty oracle-writer stretch forth his terrible hand often enough out of the air? I will close these remarks with an account of a significant Mene-Tekel, which was seen in the year 1812:—

* Menzel says, that, during the discussions which followed the abdication of Gustavus, in 1809, one of the means taken by his enemies to exclude his son from the succession, was to circulate an old prophecy among the people, speaking of the massacres that were to follow his mounting the throne. The Kings since Charles XI are Charles XII, Frederic I, Adolphus Frederic, Gustavus III, and Gustavus IV.

In the summer of that year, when the Empress Marie-Louisa was to come from Prague to Toeplitz, to visit her parents there, great festivities were prepared for her reception. The little town was quite full of noise and confusion, which the beauty of the day and evening increased. Being there at the time, I took a walk in the evening to see the illuminations, the devices, and the crowd of people. Involuntarily I stopt amid a throng before a high covered scaffolding erected in front of the palace of Prince C., from whose illuminated windows the Emperor of Austria was looking out, with his wife and daughter. Everybody was anxiously awaiting the uncovering of the concealed object; and lo, what did it prove to be? Scarcely had the curtain withdrawn, when all the lights in the opposite windows suddenly went out, and the illustrious personages disappeared. The same soon happened in the other houses round about; and the walkers and lookers on silently dispersed. They had all seen a great Mene-Tekel; the old Capetian French lilies brilliantly illuminated. Many a one whispered to his neighbour, *What does this bode to the Bonapartean bees?*

To understand the effect produced, one must remember the date, at the beginning of the Russian campaign. The cause was one of those mistakes so frequent amid the hurry and bustle of such occasions. Prince C. had ordered that the French arms should be set up and illuminated; and his painter, who was probably little versed in modern heraldry and diplomacy, fell in with an old French coat of arms. Hence this nocturnal tragedy.

But return to Charles XI: a seer of visions is always so interesting a person, that the Reader will not be sorry to hear a little more of this great King, who had far higher claims to interest. The following anecdote of him is taken from the fourth volume of the same, Arndt's 'Spirit of the Age,' pp. 343, 346. It was for the first volume of this work that the bookseller, Palm, was murdered. The author, being forced to quit his country, took refuge in Sweden, but returned to Germany as soon as there was anything for a pen to do there in the cause of liberty. No writer produced such an effect during the war of independence: indeed, as a popular writer, Arndt is perhaps the greatest his country has brought forth since Luther:—

"When Charles the Eleventh's father, the warlike Charles Gustavus, died, his son was a mere child, only a few years old. The Regency during his minority was conducted by his grandmother and a council, who governed ill and extravagantly. They would gladly have prolonged their authority after the boy came of age; and their wish was to have a slothful, careless, ignorant King, who should spend his whole time in indulging his own appetites and whims, and leave the toils of government to them. With this view they let him run about like a street-boy, with scarcely any instruction, and, in lieu of all intellectual exercises and labours, gave him his fill of fencing, riding, hunting, wrestling, and boxing. They thought they had thus brought him up as a true cappadocian, through whose thickly clouded head no gleam of light could ever pierce. They were mistaken. Charles was come of age, was utterly ignorant, could at most write his name: they fancied he would never use his pen but to sign what they bid him. He now presided in the council. He had sat there more than once, silent, bashful, confused, without opening his mouth, except to *yes*, or moving his hand, but to draw the characters of his name. The third or fourth time of his holding a council, a matter was brought forward on which the King said *No*, whereas his grandmother and the councillors intended he should say *Yes*. The Chancellor—

I think his name was Bjelke, and that he had been the King's preceptor,—tried several times to make the King understand why he was to say *Yes*: but in vain, still he summoned courage to go over the affair again to him, and ended somewhat harshly, with saying, *Now at last your Majesty will surely be able to understand it.* He had scarcely uttered these words,

when the King, a strong Herculean youth, darted from his chair, seized a red-hot poker out of the fire, struck the table with it, and said,—*Ay, I do understand that I am King: withdraw.* And this King, o. whom, on the strength of his bad education, they had hoped that he would have spent his time with mistresses, in breaking in horses, and bear-hunting, became one of the greatest and most beneficent Kings that Sweden ever had. With unwearyed diligence he, in a few years, acquired the knowledge, which he wanted, to have a right to say, *I am now King.* From the natural manner in which he had been allowed to grow up, he had learnt to understand his people and country thoroughly, and to feel with them heartily: he had become a Swede. No King could ever live as he did with all ranks of his people, joining in their amusements and sports. He was the last King of Sweden who used to go into the houses both of the town and country-folks, in all parts of his kingdom; and he danced merrily at peasants' weddings, without exciting the slightest feeling in his companions that they ought to shrink back and stand in awe of him. He was at once a King and a man, a brave soldier, a rigid economist, a firm ruler, governor, and law-giver. Wherever one goes in Sweden, even at this day, one still sees the marks of his wise administration; and there is scarcely a good institution, which was not either created, or confirmed and improved by him.

THE MIRAGE.

(From Tod's 'Antiquities of Rajasthan'.)

We had a most magnificent mirage this morning; nor do I ever recollect observing this singularly grand phenomenon on a more extensive scale, or with greater variety of form. The morning was desperately cold, the thermometer, as I mounted my horse a little after sunrise, stood at 32° below the freezing point, with a sharp biting wind from the north east. The ground was blanched with frost, and the water-skins, or *behishtis meshels*, were covered with ice at the mouth. The slender shrubs, especially the milky *ak*, were completely burnt up; and as the weather had been hitherto mild, the transition was severely felt by things animate and inanimate.

It is only in the cold season that the mirage is visible: the sojourners of Maroo call it the *see-kote*, or castles in the air.* In the deep desert to the westward, the herdsmen and travellers through these regions style it *chitram*, "the picture;" while about the plains of the Chumbal and Jumna they term it *desasur*, "the omen of the quarter." This optical deception has been noticed from the remotest times. The prophet Isaiah alludes to it when he says—"And the parched ground shall become a pool;"† which the critic has justly rendered, "and the sehab‡ shall become real water." Quintus Curtius, describing the *mirage* in the Sogdian desert, says that "for the space of four hundred furlongs, not a drop of water is to be found, and the sun's heat being very vehement in the summer, kindles such a fire in the sands, that everything is burnt up. There also arises such an exhalation that the plains wear the appearance of a vast and deep sea," which is an exact description of the *chitram* of the Indian desert. But the sehab and *chitram*, the true *mirage* of Isaiah, differ from that illusion called the *see-kote*; and, though the traveller will hasten to it in order to obtain a night's lodging, I do not think he will expect to slake his thirst there.

When we witnessed this phenomenon at first, the eye was attracted by a lofty opaque wall of lurid smoke, which seemed to be bounded by, or to rise from the very verge of the horizon. By slow degrees, the dense mass became more and more transparent, and assumed a reflecting or refracting power; shrubs were magnified into trees; the dwarf *khyre* appeared ten times larger than the gigantic *amli* of

* Literally, "The cold-weather castles."

† Isaiah, chap. 35, v. 7.

‡ Sehab, is "desert;" Sehrab, "the water of the desert;" a term which the inhabitants of the Arabian and Persian deserts apply to this optical phenomenon. The 18th verse chap. xli. of Isaiah is closer to the critic's version: "I will make the wilderness (Sehra) a pool of water." Doubtless the translators of Holy Writ, ignorant that this phenomenon was called Sehrab, "water of the waste," deemed it a tautological error; for, translated literally, "And the water of the desert shall become real water," would be nonsense; they therefore lopped off the *ab* water, and read Sehra instead of Sehrab, whereby the whole force and beauty of the prophecy is not merely diminished, but lost.

the forest. A ray of light suddenly broke the line of continuity of this yet smoky barrier; and, as if touched by the enchanter's wand, castles, towers, and trees, were seen in an aggregated cluster, partly obscured by magnificent foliage. Every accession of light produced a change in the *chittram*, which, from the dense wall that it first exhibited, had now faded into a thin transparent film, broken into a thousand masses, each mass being a huge lens; and at length the too vivid power of the sun dissolved the vision; castles, towers, and foliage, melted like the enchantment of Prospero, into "thin air."

I had long imagined that the nature of the soil had some effect in producing this illusory phenomenon, especially as the *chittram* of the desert is seen chiefly on those extensive plains productive of the *saji*, or alkaline plant, whence, by incineration, the natives produce soda, and whose base is now known to be metallic. But I have since observed it on every kind of soil. That these lands, covered with saline incrustations, tend to increase the effect of the illusion, may be concluded. But the difference between the *sehrab* or *chittram*, and the *see-kote* or *desasur*, is, that the latter is never visible but in the cold season, when the gross vapours cannot rise; and that the rarification, which gives existence to the other, destroys this, whenever the sun has attained 20° of elevation. A high wind is alike adverse to the phenomenon, and it will mostly be observed that it covets shelter, and its general appearance is a long line, which is sure to be sustained by some height, such as a grove or village, as if it required support. The first time I observed it was in the Jupoor country; none of the party had ever witnessed it in the British provinces. It appeared like an immense walled town with bastions, nor could we give credit to our guides when they talked of the *see-kote*, and assured us that the objects were merely "castles in the air." I have since seen, though but once, this panoramic scene in motion, and nothing can possibly be imagined more beautiful.

It was at Kolah, just as the sun rose, whilst walking on the terraced roof of the garden-house, my residence. As I looked towards the low range which bounds the sight to the southeast, the hill appeared in motion, sweeping with an undulating or rotatory movement along the horizon. Trees and buildings were magnified, and all seemed a kind of enchantment. Some minutes elapsed before I could account for this wonder; until I determined that it must be the masses of a floating *mirage*, which had attained its most attenuated form, and being carried by a gentle current of air past the tops and sides of the hills, while it was itself imperceptible, made them appear in motion.

But although this was novel and pleasing, it wanted the splendour of the scene of this morning, which I never saw equalled but once. This occurred at Hisar, where I went to visit a beloved friend—gone, alas! to a better world,—whose ardent and honourable mind urged me to the task I have undertaken. It was on the terrace of James Lumsdaine's house, built amidst the ruins of the castle of Feroy, in the centre of one extended waste, where the lion was the sole inhabitant, that I saw the most perfect specimen of this phenomenon: it was really sublime. Let the reader fancy himself in the midst of a desert plain, with nothing to impede the wide scope of vision, his horizon bounded by a lofty black wall, encompassing him on all sides. Let him watch the forest sunbeam break upon this barrier, and at once, as by a touch of magic, shiver it into a thousand fantastic forms, leaving a splintered pinnacle in one place, a tower in another, an arch in a third, these in turn undergoing more than kaleidoscopic changes, until the "fairy fabric" vanishes. Here it was emphatically called *Hurkend Raja ea poori*, or "the city of Raja Hurcheend," a celebrated prince of the brazen age of India. The power of reflection shown by this phenomenon cannot be better described, than by stating that it brought the very ancient Aggaron,* which is

thirteen miles distant, with its fort and bastions, close to my view.

The difference then between the *mirage* and the *see-kote* is, that the former exhibits a horizontal, the latter a columnar or vertical stratification; and in the latter case, likewise, a contrast to the other, its maximum of translucency is the last stage of its existence. In this stage it is only an eye accustomed to the phenomenon that can perceive it at all. I have passed over the plains of Meerut with a friend who had been thirty years in India, and he did not observe a *see-kote* then before our eyes; in fact, so complete was the illusion, that we only saw the town and fort considerably nearer. Monge gives a philosophical account of this phenomenon in Napoleon's campaign in Egypt; and Dr Clarke perfectly describes it in his journey to Rosetta, when "domes, turrets, and groves, were seen reflected on the glowing surface of the plain, which appeared like a vast lake extending itself between the city and the travellers." It is on reviewing this account that a critic has corrected the erroneous translation of the 'Septuagint,' and further dilated upon it in a review of Lichtenstein's 'Travels in Southern Africa';* who exactly describes our *see-kote*, of the magnifying and reflecting powers of which he gives a singular instance. Indeed, whoever notices, while at sea, the atmospheric phenomena of these southern latitudes, will be struck by the deformity of objects as they pass through this medium: what the sailors term a fog-bank is the first stage of our *see-kote*. I observed it on my voyage home, but more especially in the passage out. About six o'clock in a dark evening, while we were dancing on the waste, I perceived a ship bearing down with full sail upon us, so distinctly that I gave the alarm in expectation of a collision; so far as I recollect the helm was instantly up; and in a second no ship was to be seen. The laugh was against me. I had seen the "Flying Dutchman," according to the opinion of the experienced officer on deck; and I believed it was really a vision of the mind; but I now feel convinced it was either the reflection of our own ship in a passing cloud of this vapour, or a more distant object therein refracted. But enough of this subject. I will only add, whoever has a desire to see one of the grandest phenomena in nature, let him repair to the plains of Mairta or Horsar, and watch before the sun rises the fairy palace of Hurcheenda, infinitely grander and more imposing than a sunrise upon the Alpine Helvetia, which alone may compete with the *chittram* of the desert.

HINTS FOR TABLE TALK.

No. VIII.

BRICK-AND-MORTAR ABORTIONS—RUINS OF MODERN BUILDINGS—HOUSES MADE TO BE SOLD—A COUGH—KILLING WITH KINDNESS—THE COUGHING CHORUS.

In walking about the outskirts of the town we often see what I may call premature ruins—the commencement of buildings—the foundations of houses carried up perhaps as far as to be on a level with the ground;—the memorial of some building mania in the neighbourhood, in which the speculator has been cut short by bankruptcy. They have generally the appearance of being about ten years old or so—the effects of the panic of 1825. I do not recollect ever having seen any of these abortions of bricks and mortar, at any after period, carried on and completed. They have either been gradually obliterated from the face of the earth, which they disfigured, or removed to give place to buildings of altogether a different kind; and there are some which I have known for this dozen years, in the same rotten withering state. These premature ruins can never acquire a picturesque appearance. There is something in modern brick and mortar which seems altogether irreconcileable to Hesi or Vishnu. It might have been the capital of the Aggrones, whose immense army threatened Alexander; with Agra it may divide the honour, or both may have been founded by this prince, who was also a *Perus*, being of Porus's race.

* This is the ancient province of Horiana, and the cradle of the Aggronal race, now mercantile, and all followers of

* See 'Edinburgh Review,' vol. xxi, pp. 66 and 133.

it—grass, and nettles, and weeds may grow upon the abortion—it may become green and covered with moss—bricks may be broken from the sockets for windows that were never filled—from the doorways that never were closed—from the fire-places that were never tenanted by stoves—bricks may fall or be torn from the corners and edges, so as to round them off, but they can never look like a genuine ruin. There is nothing so dusky, husky, dry, and disagreeable as brick and mortar rubbish, it seems so to antipathise with everything in nature. When a house, for instance, is being built in the middle of a green field, what a blot there is round the spot. The verdant sward trodden down by the horses' feet and the wheels of the carts that bring the bricks, and burnt up by the unslacked lime; as the building proceeds, the bits of broken bricks, and tiles, and mortar lying about all round; and at last, when finished and walled in, a long time must pass before the house will look pleasant and really in the fields. The walls must begin to be dingy, and the grass grow up close from the foundation, and every white spot be washed away, before it will have a settled look. I cannot imagine how a palace, or mansion, or church built of our modern yellow bricks will look when a few hundred years have passed, or when ruined and dismantled by the hand of time.

We are altogether depriving our posterity of the pleasure of beholding picturesque ruins or old buildings—there will be few antiquaries who will refer to the style, or anything else in architecture, belonging to the nineteenth century. St James's Palace, and the old red brick houses in the Temple and Lincoln's Inn, have a substantial, venerable, and in many cases picturesque appearance,—but how will our modern yellow brick-dust human packing-cases look when the same number of years have rolled over their heads—if indeed they stand so long.

Nine out of ten of the houses now built are built only, like the Pedlar's razors, to be sold;—that any one should live in them seems altogether an after thought. I am unfortunately fixed in one of this character. It looked all very close and compact and nicely finished when new, but in a very short time the shutting of a door would drive mortar from the corners and edgings of the walls, and plaster from the roof. The ceiling being covered with lime not sufficiently slackened, blistered and soon began to look as if it had had an attack of the small-pox. Every windy night the windows rattle most uproariously, as if they and the wind were old acquaintances, and were merry-making at their meeting. The heat of the fires in the rooms soon began to show of what stuff the floorings were made;—it so shrank the boards that the floors soon looked more like railings than anything else. This last grievance I have more particularly felt—the March winds having made me the present of a delightful ticklish cough which has confined me to my room. To keep myself free from a draught has been the constant exercise of my ingenuity. My first discovery was that the wind blew upon me through the very carpet;—the carpet was therefore taken up and the seams stuffed with paper, then list was nailed round the edge of the doors, then strips of paper pasted round the window-sashes—and—and—but I might write my ink-glass dry, and my pen to a stump, without enumerating all my troubles.

What an extraordinary disease is a cough? It makes one bark like a dog, or grunt like a lion,—yach!—yach!—yow!—ugh-ugh-u-oo!—It feels as if some little imp had got into your thorax, and amused itself with tickling it with a feather;—and it soon becomes so tender that every cough feels as if a bundle of thorns were torn through your throat, and your whole frame is shaken like the world with an earthquake. Nor is it a malady which exhausts itself with the action; the more you cough the more tender, irritable, and ticklish, the throat becomes, and the more you are compelled to emit the yelping sounds till something or other allays the irritation. It is impossible to prevent yourself coughing,—yawning or laughter may be overcome, but coughing cannot. I have a faint recollection of an anecdote in which two persons were concealed under a table, and

the one feeling an inclination to cough which he found it impossible to overcome, requested the other to stab him to the heart at once, to prevent a discovery. I think the circumstance relates to the adventures of some of the crown-losing Stuarts either in Cromwell's time or later.

A cough, like the tooth-ache, is a disease which excites but little sympathy in those around you, it is so common—though probably accompanied with greater pain than many others with finer names—and “it's only a cough—he will soon be well,” is the usual comment upon the subject. I merely notice this to show how custom blunts the feelings.—It's such a common disease,—it can't be serious. Burns says, in his ‘Address to the Toothache,’—

“When fevers burn, or aches freeze us,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholics squeeze us,
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us
Wi' pitying moan;
But this—the hell o' a' diseases—
Aye mocks our groan.”

I do not mean to say that their “pitying moan” or sympathising “wae me!” does one any good, or alleviates the malady in any degree, but it shows that there are human beings in the world to whom you are not altogether indifferent.

There is such a thing as “killing with kindness”—at all events I have often found kind intentions very annoying, and especially when troubled with a cough. Just after a fit of coughing, for instance, before you have time to draw a relieving breath, you feel a soft hand on your back, and another with a spoonful of jelly at your mouth,—almost thrusting it in, with “Poor dear!—what pain he must suffer—do take this jelly”—t'will prevent another fit!—Thus they go on teasing and irritating you and nauseating you with sweets, till a dose of rhubarb would be a relief to your taste, and if you utter the least complaint, you are thought ungrateful, unkind, nay, barbarous. What can be more annoying than when you happen to have a little ease from the earthquakes that rend your heart, and are just falling into a dose on your easy chair, you hear a gentle “hush!” whispered i' y' lourse to somebody else in the room who is not making any noise, and then a light step across the room, and then falling lightly over your head a silk handkerchief, which tickles your nose, makes a draught, dispels your drowsiness, and makes you quake again! But you must not complain—it was done with the best intention—the good soul was afraid you would catch cold in your head! In my opinion, the whisperings and hushings, and soft treadings, and shutting doors quietly, and all that, tend far more to keep one awake when drowsy than an absolute noise. To dispose oneself to sleep requires an absence of any effort upon the subject—to endeavour to think upon nothing; but whispering and hushing keeps the mind in remembrance of the desired object, and so prevents its attainment.

You have just got a few moments respite from the commotion—you have just lain down upon the sofa, and a relieving slumber is gently stealing o'er you—Whuff! comes a cloak over your shoulders; you jump up—“Why the deuce did you disturb me!”—“You would get more cold, dear, to sleep without something over you.”—Well! it's all done for the best, and so must be endured.

I have amused myself with thinking whether a cough could not be imitated on some musical instrument. I have noticed all the different tones, and run up and down the gamut during a fit. The bassoon has occurred to me as the best suited for such an imitation. It would be a novelty, at all events, if some musician would compose a “Coughing Chorus,” and introduce a solo for the bassoon—Yach-yach-yow! ugh-ugh-u-oo-oo!

BOOKWORM.

PROFOUND TRUTH.

On every occasion in which virtue is exercised, if something is not added to happiness, something is taken away from anxiety.—*Bentham's Deontology.*

THE WEEK.

PERSONAL PORTRAITS OF EMINENT MEN.

[It was accidentally omitted to mention last week, that the account of Wolff, the German scholar, was taken from the first number, just published, of ‘Cochrane's Foreign Quarterly Review.’]

ROBERT BRUCE, KING OF SCOTLAND.

(From *Fraser Tytler's History.*)

In his figure, the King was tall and well-shaped. Before broken down by illness, and in the prime of life, he was nearly six feet high; his hair curled closely and shortly round his neck, which possessed that breadth and thickness that belong to men of great strength; he was broad-shouldered and open-chested, and the proportion of his limbs combined power with lightness and activity. These qualities were increased not only by his constant occupation in war, but by his fondness for the chase, and all manly amusements. It is not known whether he was dark or fair complexioned, but his forehead was low, his cheek bones strong and prominent, and the general expression of his countenance open and cheerful, although he was maimed by a wound which had injured his lower jaw. His manners were dignified and engaging; after battle, nothing could be pleasanter or more courteous; and it is infinitely to his honour, that in a savage age, and smarting under injuries which attacked him in his kindest and tenderest relations, he never abused a victory, but conquered often as effectually by his generosity and kindness, as by his great military talents. We know, however, from his interview with the Papal legates, that when he chose to express displeasure, his look was stern and kingly, and at once imposed silence and insured obedience. He excelled in all the exercises of chivalry, to such a degree, indeed, that the English themselves did not scruple to account him the third best knight in Europe.* His memory was stored with the romances of the period, in which he took great delight. Their hair-breadth 'scapes and perilous adventures were sometimes scarcely more wonderful than his own, and he had early imbibed from such works an appetite for individual enterprise and glory, which, had it not been checked by a stronger passion, the love of liberty might have led him into fatal mistakes. It is quite conceivable, that Bruce, instead of a great King, might, like Richard the First, have become only a king knight-errant.

But from this error he was saved by the love of his country, directed by an admirable judgment, an unshaken perseverance, and a vein of strong good sense. It is here, although some may think it the basest, that we are to find assuredly the brightest part of the character of the King. It is these qualities which are especially conspicuous in his long war for the liberty of Scotland. They enabled him to follow out his plans through many a tedious year with undeviating energy; to bear reverses, to calculate his means, to wait for his opportunities, and to concentrate his whole strength upon one great point, till it was gained and secured to his country for ever. Brilliant military talent and consummate bravery have often been found amongst men, and proved far more of a curse than a blessing; but rarely indeed shall we discover them united to so excellent judgment, controlled by such perfect disinterestedness, and employed for so sacred an end. There is but one instance on record where he seems to have thought more of himself than of his people,† and even this, though rash, was heroic.

* * * * *

Immediately after the King's death, his heart was taken out, as he had himself directed. He was then buried with great state and solemnity under the pavement of the choir, in the Abbey church of Dunfermline, and over the grave was raised a rich marble monument, which was made at Paris. Centuries passed on, the ancient church, with the marble monument, fell into ruins, and a more modern building was erected on the same site. This, in our own days,

gave way to time, and in clearing the foundations for a third church, the workmen laid open a tomb which proved to be that of Robert the Bruce. The lead coating in which the body was found inclosed, was twisted round the head into the shape of a rude crown. A rich cloth of gold, but much decayed, was thrown over it, but, on examining the skeleton, it was found that the breast-bone had been sawn asunder, to get at the heart.*

There remained, therefore, no doubt, that after the lapse of almost five hundred years, his countrymen were permitted, with a mixture of delight and awe to behold the very bones of their great deliverer.

* See an interesting Report of the discovery of the Tomb, and the re-interment of the body of Robert Bruce, drawn up by Sir Henry Jardine, in the second volume of the ‘Transactions of the Antiquarian Society of Scotland,’ part ii, p. 435.

ROMANCE OF REAL LIFE.

NO. LXVI. GENEROUS CHILDREN GENEROUSLY HELPED.

[The compiler of the ‘Sixty Curious Narratives’ has extracted this delightful anecdote from the ‘Memoirs of —,’ we shall not say whom, that we may not injure the agreeable effect produced by the disclosure of his name, upon those who are acquainted with his writings. Every record of handsome actions performed by such men, is a boon to mankind, and should be received by them with gratitude; for it gives double zest to every handsome sentence in their books, increasing that faith in the good and beautiful which made them what they were.]

A GENTLEMAN, being at Marseilles, hired a boat with an intention of sailing for pleasure; he entered into conversation with the two young men who owned the vessel, and learned that they were not watermen by trade, but silversmiths; and that when they could be spared from their usual business, they employed themselves in that way to increase their earnings. On expressing his surprise at their conduct, and imputing it to an avaricious disposition; “Oh! sir,” said the young men, “if you knew our reasons, you would ascribe it to a better motive. Our father, anxious to assist his family, scraped together all he was worth, and purchased a vessel for the purpose of trading to the coast of Barbary; but was unfortunately taken by a pirate, carried to Tripoli, and sold for a slave. He writes word, that he has luckily fallen into the hands of a master who treats him with great humanity; but that the sum which is demanded for his ransom is so exorbitant, that it will be impossible for him ever to raise it: he adds, that we must therefore relinquish all hope of ever seeing him, and be contented; that he has as many comforts as his situation will admit. With the hopes of restoring to his family a beloved father, we are striving, by every honest means in our power, to collect the sum necessary for his ransom, and we are not ashamed to employ ourselves in this occupation of watermen.” The gentleman was struck with this account, and on his departure made them a handsome present. Some months afterward, the young men being at work in their shop, were greatly surprised at the sudden arrival of their father, who threw himself into their arms, exclaiming, at the same time, that he was fearful they had taken some unjust method to raise the money for his ransom, for it was too great a sum for them to have gained by their ordinary occupation. They professed their ignorance of the whole affair, and could only suspect they owed their father's release to that stranger to whose generosity they had been before so much obliged.

After Montesquieu's death, an account of this affair was found among his papers, and the sum actually remitted to Tripoli for the old man's ransom. It is a pleasure to hear of such an act of benevolence performed even by a person totally unknown to us; but the pleasure is infinitely increased, when it proves the union of virtue and talents in an author so renowned as Montesquieu.

* ‘Ferdun a Goodal,’ vol. ii, p. 905.

† See supra, p. 304

CHARACTERS OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

BY WILLIAM HAZLITT.

NO. XIX.—ROMEO AND JULIET.—(CONCLUDED).

It would be hard to say which of the two garden scenes is the finest, that where he first converses with his love, or takes leave of her the morning after their marriage. Both are like a heaven upon earth: the blissful bower of Paradise let down upon this lower world. We will give only one passage of these well known scenes to show the perfect refinement and delicacy of Shakespeare's conception of the female character. It is wonderful how Collins, who was a critic and a poet of great sensibility, should have encouraged the common error on this subject by saying—"But stronger Shakespeare felt for man alone."

The passage we mean is Juliet's apology for her maiden boldness.

"Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face;
Else would a maiden blush bate my cheek
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
What I have spoke—but farewell compliment:
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say ay,
And I will take thee at thy word—Yet if thou
swear'st,

Thou mayst prove false: at lovers' perjuries
They say Jove laughs. Oh, gentle Romeo,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;
Or if thou think I am too quickly won,
I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay.
So thou wilt woo: but else not for the world.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;
And therefore thou mayst think my behaviour light;
But trust me, gentlemen, I'll prove more true
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou over-heard'st ere I was ware,
My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discovered."

In this and all the rest her heart, fluttering between pleasure, hope, and fear, seems to have dictated to her tongue, and "calls true love spoken simple modesty." Of the same sort, but bolder in virgin innocence, is her soliloquy after her marriage with Romeo.

"Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phœbus' mansion; such a waggoner
As Phœton would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately,
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaways' eyes may wink; and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of, and unseen!—
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties: or if love be blind,
It best agrees with night.—Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidhoods:
Hood my unmann'd blood bating in my cheeks
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown
bold,
Thinks true love acted, simple modesty.
Come, night!—Come, Romeo! come, thou day
in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—
Come, gentle night; come, loving, black-brow'd
night,
Give me my Romeo: and when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine,
That all the world shall be in love with night,
And pay no worship to the garish sun.—
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possess'd it; and though I am sold,
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day,
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child, that hath new robes,
And may not wear them."

We the rather insert this passage here, inasmuch as we have no doubt it has been expunged from the Family Shakespeare. Such critics do not perceive that the feelings of the heart sanctify, without disguising, the impulses of nature. Without refinement themselves, they confound modesty with hypocrisy. Not so the German critic, Schlegel. Speaking of 'Romeo and Juliet,' he says, "It was reserved for Shakespeare to unite purity of heart and the glow of imagination, sweetness and dignity of manners, and passionate violence, in one ideal picture." The character is indeed one of perfect truth and sweetness. It has nothing forward, nothing coy, nothing affected or coquettish about it;—it is a pure effusion of nature. It is as frank as it is modest, for it has no thought that it wishes to conceal. It reposes in conscious innocence on the strength of its affections. Its delicacy does not consist in coldness and reserve, but in combining warmth of imagination and tenderness of heart with the most voluptuous sensibility. Love is a gentle flame that rarefies and expands her whole being. What an idea of trembling haste and airy grace, borne upon the thoughts of love, does the Friar's exclamation give of her, as she approaches his cell to be married—

"Here comes the lady. Oh, so light of foot
Will ne'er wear out the everlasting flint:
A lover may bestride the gossamer
That idles in the wanton summer air,
And yet not fall, so light is vanity."

The tragic part of this character is of a piece with the rest. It is the heroic founded on tenderness and delicacy. Of this kind are her resolution to follow the Friar's advice, and the conflict in her bosom between apprehension and love when she comes to take the sleeping potion. Shakespeare is blamed for the mixture of low characters. If this is a deformity, it is the source of a thousand beauties. One instance is the contrast between the guileless simplicity of Juliet's attachment to her first love, and the convenient policy of the nurse in advising her to marry Paris, which excites such indignation in her mistress. "Ancient damnation! oh, most wicked fiend," &c.

Romeo is Hamlet in love. There is the same rich exuberance of passion and sentiment in the one, that there is of thought and sentiment in the other. Both are absent and self-involved, both live out of themselves in a world of imagination. Hamlet is abstracted from everything; Romeo is abstracted from everything but his love, and lost in it. His "frail thoughts daily with faint surmise," and are fashioned out of the suggestions of hope, "the flattery of sleep." He is himself only in his Juliet; she is his only reality, his heart's true home and idol. The rest of the world is to him a passing dream. How finely is this character pourtrayed where he recollects himself on seeing Paris slain at the tomb of Juliet!

"What said my man when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode? I think
He told me Paris should have married Juliet."

And again, just before he hears the sudden tidings of her death—

"If I may trust the flattery of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand;
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne,
And all this day an unaccustom'd spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead,
(Strange dream! that gives a dead man leave to
think)

And breath'd such life with kisses on my lips,
That I reviv'd and was an emperor.
Ah me! how sweet is love itself possess'd,
When but love's shadows are so rich in joy!"

Romeo's passion for Juliet is not a first love: it succeeds and drives out his passion for another mistress, Rosaline, as the sun hides the stars. This is perhaps an artifice (not absolutely necessary) to give us a higher opinion of the lady, while the first absolute surrender of her heart to him enhances the richness of the prize. The commencement, progress,

and ending of his second passion are however complete in themselves, not injured, if they are not bettered by the first. The outline of the play is taken from an Italian novel; but the dramatic arrangement of the different scenes between the lovers, the more than dramatic interest in the progress of the story, the development of the characters with time and circumstances, just according to the degree and kind of interest excited, are not inferior to the expression of passion and nature. It has been ingeniously remarked, among other proofs of skill in the contrivance of the fable, that the improbability of the main incident in the piece, the administering of the sleeping-potion, is softened and obviated from the beginning by the introduction of the Friar on his first appearance culling simples and descanting on their virtues. Of the passionate scenes in this tragedy, that between the Friar and Romeo when he is told of his sentence of banishment, that between Juliet and the Nurse when she hears of it, and of the death of her cousin Tybalt (which bear no proportion in her mind, when passion after the first shock of surprise throws its weight into the scale of her affections) and the last scene at the tomb, are among the most natural and overpowering. In all of these it is not merely the force of any one passion that is given, but the slightest and most unlooked-for transitions from one to another, the mingling currents of every different feeling rising up and prevailing in turn, swayed by the master-mind of the poet, as the waves undulate beneath the gliding storm. Thus when Juliet has by her complaints encouraged the Nurse to say, "Shame come to Romeo," she instantly repels the wish, which she had herself occasioned, by answering—

"Blister'd be thy tongue
For such a wish, he was not born to shame.
Upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit,
For 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd
Sole monarch of the universal earth!
O, what a beast was I to chide him so?"

NURSE. Will you speak well of him that kill'd
your cousin?

JULIET. Shall I speak ill of him that is my
husband?

Ah, my poor lord, what tongue shall smooth thy
name,

When I, thy three-hours' wife, have mangled it?"

And then follows, on the neck of her remorse and returning fondness, that wish treading almost on the brink of impiety, but still held back by the strength of her devotion to her lord, that "father, mother, nay, or both were dead," rather than Romeo banished. If she requires any other excuse, it is in the manner in which Romeo echoes her frantic grief and disappointment in the next scene at being banished from her.—Perhaps one of the finest pieces of acting that ever was witnessed on the stage, is Mr Kean's manner of doing this scene and his repetition of the word *Banished*. He treads close indeed upon the genius of his author.

A passage which this celebrated actor and able commentator on Shakespeare (actors are the best commentators on the poets) did not give with equal truth or force of feeling was the one which Romeo makes at the tomb of Juliet, before he drinks the poison.—

"Let me peruse this face—
Mercutio's kinsman! noble county Paris!
What said my man, when my betossed soul
Did not attend him as we rode? I think,
He told me, Paris should have married Juliet!
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so?—O, give me thy hand,
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave—
For here lies Juliet.

* * * * *
O, my love! my wife!
Death that hath suck'd the honey of thy breath,
Had no power yet upon thy beauty;
Thou art not conquer'd; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips, and in thy cheeks,

And Death's pale flag is not advanced there.—
Tybalt, ly'st thou there in thy bloody sheet?
O, what more favour can I do to thee,
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,
To sunder him that was thine enemy?
Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? I will believe
That unsubstantial death is amorous;
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour.
For fear of that, I will stay still with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again: here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chamber-maids; oh, here
Will I set up my everlasting rest;
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your
last!

Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, oh you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!—
Come, bitter conduct, come unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks my sea-sick weary bark!
Here's to my love!—[Drinks.] O, true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick.—Thus with a kiss I die."

The lines in this speech describing the loveliness of Juliet, who is supposed to be dead, have been compared to those in which it is said of Cleopatra after her death, that she looked "as she would take another Antony in her strong toil of grace;" and a question has been started which is the finest, that we do not pretend to decide. We can more easily decide between Shakspeare and any other author, than between him and himself.—Shall we quote any more passages to show his genius or the beauty of "Romeo and Juliet"? At that rate, we might quote the whole. The late Mr Sheridan, on being shown a volume of the "Beauties of Shakspeare," very properly asked—"But where are the other eleven?" The character of Mercutio in this play is one of the most mercurial and spirited of the productions of Shakspeare's comic muse.

ON THE DEATHS OF SOME ILLUSTRIOS PERSONS OF ANTIQUITY.

(An Abridgment, with which a Correspondent has favoured us, from "Sir Henry Halford's Essays.")

SYLLA, the dictator, died by the rupture of an internal abscess, in a paroxysm of rage. He had, it seems, set his heart upon the restoration of the capitol, and upon its dedication, by a certain day. But a messenger brought him intelligence that the resources he expected for this purpose were not forthcoming; on which he gave way to his unbridled passion, vomited a large quantity of blood, passed a night of great distress, and died on the following morning. The expressions of Valerius Maximus are very forcible. "He vomited up his life, mingled with blood and threats;" so that, as he afterwards says, "it was doubtful whether Sylla or Sylla's wrath should first come to an end."

Crassus, the eminent Roman orator and friend of Cicero, died of *pleurisy*. He had been speaking with great animation and effect in the Senate, when he was seized with a pain in his side, and broke out into a profuse perspiration. On going home he had a shivering fit, followed by fever. The pain in the side still continued, and he died on the 7th day of the disease. The terms of deep sorrow in which Cicero laments so feelingly and so beautifully the loss of this eminent man, may justify the regret of physicians, even at this distant period, that it has not been transmitted down to them what resources of our art were resorted to in order to save a life so valuable to his country. Thus much, however, we do know, that Celsus, who lived not many years afterwards, suggests the proper treatment of a pleurisy, by bleeding, cupping, and blistering; all the expedients, in fact, which we use at this era of improvement in the art of medicine. We may rest assured, therefore, that nothing was left undone to save this distinguished person; and that the regret of his friends was not

aggravated, nor their grief rendered more poignant, by any consideration of that kind.

Socrates was put to death by the common mode at Athens, of despatching persons capitally convicted, that is, by a narcotic poison. But as neither Xenophon nor Plato mentions the precise poison which was employed, we are left to conjecture what it was by our knowledge of what narcotics the Greeks were acquainted with, or employed at that time. They knew, amongst others, the *Aconite*, the *Black Poppy*, the *Hyoeyamus*, and *Hemlock*. Dion, the father of Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, who was intimately acquainted with Plato, and a contemporary of Socrates, was poisoned by hemlock; and Plutarch says that Phocion drank the conium (hemlock). This, we have reason to suppose, was always fresh pounded for the occasion; and we learn, from Theophrastus, that the *whole* plant was usually pounded together, but that the Chians peeled off the outer rind, as occasioning pain, and that then, having bruised the other part and put it in water, they drank the infusion, and found it to cause an easy death. Whatever the poison was, it must have been one of weak and tardy operation; for the executioner told Socrates, that it would prevent its effect, if he entered into earnest dispute, and that it was sometimes necessary to repeat the dose three or four times. After a while, the philosopher is described as having felt a weight in his legs, as if he had been intoxicated. The effect of the drug grew stronger, and made him, at length, so insensible to pain, that he did not feel when his foot was pinched. The extremities grew cold,—he was convulsed, and expired.

But what was the poison contained in that "ring, the avenger of Cannæ, and the retributor for so much blood," by which Hannibal destroyed himself? Although the Carthaginians were a much more civilized people than their enemies, the Romans (who happen to be their historians) are willing to allow, it would be too much to suppose them acquainted with the inventions of modern chemistry, and the poison was most probably the insipid juice of some deleterious vegetable. Mr Hatchett conjectures that it may have been derived from the *Euphorbia officinalis*, which is a native of Africa. As to the report of Hannibal's having been poisoned by drinking bullock's blood, which is mentioned by Plutarch, it must be a fable, as was that also of the death of Themistocles, by drinking a similar draught, for the blood of that animal is not poisonous. An accomplished nobleman told me that he was present at one of the bull-fights at Madrid, when a person rushed from the crowd, and having made his way to the bull, which the matador had just stricken, caught the blood, as it flowed from the wound, in a goblet, and drank it off before the assembly. On inquiring into the object which the poor Spaniard had in view, it appeared that the blood of a bull just slain was a popular remedy for consumptive symptoms. The poison with which Nero destroyed Britannicus was probably the laurel water. Tacitus states that, when Nero had determined to despatch the ill-fated youth, he sent for Locusta, a convicted female prisoner, who had been pardoned, and was kept for state purposes, and ordered her to prepare a poison which should produce its effect immediately. Locusta prepared one which killed a goat in five hours. This would not serve the tyrant's purpose—he ordered her to provide a more speedy instrument, to prepare it in his own chamber, and in his presence. The boiling began, and was urged to the effectual moment, in proof of which it was tried on a hog, and the animal was killed by it immediately. Dinner is served. The young members of the Imperial family are sitting at the foot of the table; the Emperor and his guests reclining on their sides. The unhappy youth calls for water—the pugnacious taster tastes, and then serves it. It is too hot. Some of it is poured off, and the glass is filled up with a fluid resembling water—but this contains the poison. The young man drinks it, and is seized instantly with an epileptic fit, in which he expires. He is buried the same night. There is a great similarity in several points between this case and that of Sir Theodosius

Boughton, who was poisoned by Captain Donellan, with laurel water, in 1780. In both there was the attempt on the part of the murderer to pass off the insensibility caused by the drug for an epileptic fit; and in both there was an extraordinary lividness of countenance in the victim. I remember to have seen the face of Sir Theodosius Boughton, when the corpse had been disinterred, in order to be examined for the satisfaction of the Coroner's jury, and its colour resembled that of a pickled walnut.

Alexander the Great was said to have been poisoned; but Arrian, who has written the best account of his death, though he mentions that such a report had prevailed, gives a rational account of his illness, and of the *bulletins* which were issued respecting it, the most ancient series of bulletins on record. The story goes, that the poison was of so subtle a nature, that no vessel of metal could hold it, and that accordingly it was carried in the hoof of a mule. But this is a mistake arising from the double meaning of the Greek word *onyx*, which signifies either the onyx, a precious stone, or a hoof. The fact is, that Alexander died of a remittent fever, which he caught in the marshes of Babylon.

Arrian, after detailing the daily progress of Alexander's last illness, gives a beautiful portraiture of the character of that great man, whose spirit and energy, manifested in the conquest of so large an extent of country, were fully equalled by his wisdom in controlling and attaching to his government the nations which he had subdued. Of the merit of his system of policy of intermarrying his wounded soldiers with the females of the conquered countries, and of appointing Macedonian officers to command the native troops, what stronger proofs can be given, than that the experience of more than two thousand years has added nothing to what his instinctive discernment had already suggested to him, that his successors were taught, by what he had done, to found and to govern kingdoms; and that the efficiency of the British army in India, to keep in subjection nearly one hundred millions of the inhabitants of that vast country, is at this moment maintained by the very same measures which Alexander devised and carried into execution?

ON THE GIPSIES

THE wonderful begets not wonder when
Familiarised, and so do we behold

A race apart among the sons of men.

What are they? lost from sunny lands of gold,

Hath swart Bengal on their hearts a hold?

Or, scattered through the nations of the earth,

Are they a particle of Egypt old,

Stricken of prophecy? or claim they birth

With they which had a God to lead them forth,

And made the waves an avenue? Who know?

They are among the mysteries of worth,

To humble us to wisdom, for they show

How little is the knowledge that we boast,

And thence induce a faith where thought is lost.

G. E. I.

* * * It is now pretty generally admitted, we believe, that the Gipsies come from Hindostan. The conjecture is, that they expatriated themselves during the irruption of one of its conquerors. Grellmann, a German writer (of whose work on them there is a translation) has quite proved this origin, in our opinion, by his comparison of the Gipsy and Hindostane languages,—far more conclusive than such arguments are wont to be.—ED.

PASSAGE IN SHAKESPEARE CORRECTED.

"Vaulting ambition that o'erleaps itself,

should be "its self." *Sell* is *saddle* in Spenser and elsewhere, from the Latin and Italian. This emendation was shown to the late Mr Hazlitt, an acute man at least, who expressed his conviction that it was the right reading, and added somewhat more in approbation of it.—Landor's *Examination of William Shakespeare*.

FINE ARTS.

Exhibition of the Society of British Artists in Suffolk Street.

THE Exhibition this season comprises few works of the higher classes of painting, but we think it shews an advance upon former years; the number of pictures positively bad being much reduced. The historical pictures are few, and, with one exception, contain little worth remark; the narrative pieces are few; the portraits are in greater number, but not many of them good. The strength of the collection lies among its landscapes, which are numerous; they are chiefly drawn from native scenery, and the best of them are of this number. Having premised these general observations, we will quote a few of the pictures that pleased us best. 'The Haarlem Maer—Moonlight' (10), G. Balmer, a very clever picture; the brilliant moon, the pale neutral tint of the distance, the half-developed colours of the foreground, the long, frequent, uncertain shadows, are in the true spirit of nature and beauty. 'Ancient Puteoli, in the Bay of Baiae, with the Landing of Saint Paul' (131), W. Linton, is rich and shewy in colouring, but flimsy and unreal in substance; it is rather like a vision than a reality, but has scarcely grandeur enough to seem supernatural. 'A Monk reading a Tomb-stone' (18), T. Roods, is a clever piece of effect, but no more. The lamp burning before a shrine in the back-ground looks like a living flame. 'Village Festival' (20), W. Shayer, is a lively scene; but the best part is the roof of the house and the boughs overhanging it, the effect of which is so real, that one expects to see the tree move, or a bird alight on the tiles. 'Near Totnes, Devon' (148), F. W. Watts, is a lovely scene, and very tastefully painted. 'The Reprieve, from a Spanish Romance' (53), J. R. Herbert, wants a line or two of explanation in the catalogue; the girl is painted with great feeling and delicacy; the face is from you, and yet the little glimpse one catches of the features, suffices to suggest a lovely one. There is a little appearance of weakness in the expression of the knight to whom she is kneeling, which the story may warrant, or even require; but of this the catalogue leaves us in ignorance. 'Scene in Devonshire' (75), F. R. Lee, is a deep and leafy nook, such as England is richer in than any other country,—cool, verdant, fertile, sequestered. It is painted with a proper relish for its tranquillity and sweetness. 'Cassandra predicting the Murder of Agamemnon on his arrival, after ten years' absence, at Mycenea, painted for the Duke of Sutherland; the head of Cassandra from the Hon. Mrs C. Norton' (149), B. R. Haydon. Agamemnon, returning from the siege of Troy, among his share of the spoils, brought home Cassandra, who had swindled Apollo out of the gift of prophecy, a gift spoiled in the making, and saddled with the incredulity of the hearers. Cassandra, arriving at the house of the King of Kings, denounces it as the future scene of his murder. This is the point of time Mr Haydon has chosen. The drawing is worthy of his reputation; and the colouring, though perhaps not quite natural, is solid and effective. But as a design, does not the picture want unity? The figures appear to us a little too much like separate studies for the characters. Cassandra raves, Agamemnon looks unconscious, Ægisthus grasps his dagger, Clytemnestra holds her husband with one hand and her paramour with the other, Orestes is panic-struck—all the figures are busy in their allotted parts; but they seem to pay no regard to one another; they neither look at nor from each other, but each appears intent solely upon the due performance of his own duty, like actors at a rehearsal. The effect of all this is, that one is struck with the prodigious energy and effort in detail, and the entire absence of effect in the whole. The individuals are full of intention, yet the total is not in earnest. The point worthiest of admiration, we think, is the horror-struck and understanding look of the horses, particularly of one of them, who seems absolutely inhaling what the prophetess utters. The subject is injured by want of space.

COLUMBUS.

As once, to him who his adventurous keel
Urged through Atlantic waves, (a man, I ween,
Full rich in evidence of things unseen,
Which to his soaring reason made appeal!)
The wished-for continent did itself reveal,
Not by its towering hills, or groves of green,—
For still an ocean wide did intervene;—
But odours on his senses 'gan to steal,
Wafted from the new world, more sweet than aught
In that he left behind; and now he felt,
With what delight! that he on truth had built:—
So, he who long his heavenward course hath held,
Finds, as he nears the port, his voyage fraught
With sweetest sense of things yet unbeknown!

A READER.

TABLE TALK.

Self-conceit and malice are needed to discover or to imagine faults, and it is much easier for an ill-natured man than for a good-natured man to be smart and witty.—*Sharp's Essays*.

STRANGE RECORD.

I remember having seen the heart of one that was bowelled, as suffering for high treason, that being cast into the fire leaped, at first, at least a foot and half in height, and after by degrees lower and lower, for the space, as I remember, of seven or eight minutes.—*Bacon on Life and Death*.

SULTAN MAHOMED.

It is a fact but little known, that most of the Asiatic princes possess a trade; the great Arungzeb was a cap maker, and sold his caps to such advantage on those ninth-day fairs, that his funeral expenses were by his own express command defrayed from the privy purse, the accumulation of his personal labour. A delightful anecdote is recorded of the Ghiss King Mahomed, whose profession was literary, and who obtained good prices from his Omrahs for his specimens of calligraphy. While engaged in transcribing one of the Persian poets, a professed scholar, who, with others, attended the *conversazione*, suggested an emendation, which was instantly attended to, and the supposed error amended. When the Moolah was gone, the Monarch erased the emendation and re-inserted the passage. An Omrah had observed and questioned the action, to which the King replied: "It was better to make a blot in a manuscript, than wound the vanity of a humble scholar."—*Tod's Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

DRAMATIC PASSAGE BETWEEN A CALIPH AND A PEASANT.

The Khalif Al Mohdi being one day engaged in a hunting match, strayed from his attendants, and, being pressed with hunger and thirst, was obliged to betake himself to an Arab's tent, in order to meet with some refreshment. The poor man immediately brought out his coarse brown bread and a pot of milk. Al Mohdi asked him if he had nothing else to give him; upon which the Arab went directly to fetch a jug of wine, and presented it to him. After the Khalif had drunk a good draught, he demanded of the Arab whether he did not know him? The other having answered that he did not; "I would have you know then (replied Al Mohdi), that I am one of the principal Lords of the Khalif's court." After he had taken another draught, he put the same question to the Arab as before; who answering, "Have I not already told you that I know you not?" Al Mohdi returned, "I am a much greater person than I have made you believe." Then he drank again, and asked his host the third time, whether he did not know him? to which the other replied, "that he might depend upon the truth of the answer he had already given him." "I am, then (said Al Mohdi), the Khalif, before whom all the world prostrate themselves." The Arab no sooner heard those words, than he carried off the pitcher, and would not suffer his guest to drink any more. Al Mohdi being surprised at his behaviour, asked him why he took away his wine? The Arab replied, "Because I am afraid that, if you take a fourth draught, you will

tell me you are the Prophet Mohammed; and if by chance a fifth, that you are God Almighty himself." This gentle rebuke so pleased the Khalif that he could not forbear laughing; and, being soon rejoined by his people, he ordered a purse of silver and a fine vest to be given the poor man, who had entertained him in so hospitable a manner. The Arab, in a transport of joy for the good fortune he had met with, exclaimed, "I shall henceforth take you for what you pretend to be, even though you should make yourself two or three times more considerable than you have done."—*Universal History*.

PLEASANT FATHER!

Proud, silent, morose, the Comte de Chateau briand's whole life (father of the celebrated French writer now living) had been spent in efforts to raise the fallen fortunes of his family—efforts which had uniformly terminated in vexation and disappointment. He is described as tall, with a severe and marked countenance, aquiline nose, thin and pale lips, and eyes deep set and grey, like those of a lion or those of the ancient barbarians ("aux yeux enfoncés et glauques, comme ceux des lions, ou des anciens barbares"), and his eye-balls glowing like a ball of fire upon the least excitement.

"And oft in sudden mood, for many a day,
From all communion he would start away;
And then his rarely called attendants said,
Through night's long hours would sound his heavy
tread.

O'er the dark gallery, where his fathers frowned
In rude but antique protraiture around."

With the advance of age the disposition of the dreaded father became gradually more taciturn and unsociable; he never went out but once a year, and that was at Easter, to attend mass at the parish church of Combourg. He made the solitude around him still more solitary; his family and servants he dispersed in the four turrets of the chateau. In the autumn evenings, wrapt in a dressing-gown of white rattee, with a large night-cap, of the same colour, on his head, he strode across the immense *salon*; if his wife, with her two children, the chevalier and his sister, all three seated motionless by the fire-side, ventured to exchange a few words, a severe *qui-dit-on?* uttered in passing, instantly silenced the rash attempt, and not another word was heard until the stroke of ten suddenly arrested his march, and sent him to his place of repose. His retirement was a signal for an immediate explosion of words and hilarity.—*Cochrane's Foreign Quarterly Review*.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

The sonnet addressed to Mr Heraud on his 'Descent into Hell,' shall appear in a week or two.

We were much pleased at receiving the book and letter from Greenock, as the writer will see.

The fault-finding of our Correspondent who sent us the Poem by Fanshawe, is as good as praises from most men. It shall have our due attention. So shall the pamphlet sent us from Newcastle.

The 'Good Man's Prayer' next week. Also Z. Z.
Extracts from the articles of Mr Lamb are again unavoidably delayed.

LASCARIS in our next, and the epigrams from Ptolemy the week after. We extend our gold as much as possible, to secure successive value to our numbers.

The rest of our correspondents will have the goodness to excuse us till next week.

In the sonnet of the week before last, addressed to F. M. W.,—for "either" in the third line, read "rather," and instead of "For" in the ninth line, read "Nor."

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